

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR IS US

SUBJ: THE KNESSET HONORS THE U.S. BICENTENNIAL

BEGIN SUMMARY: KNESSET OBSERVANCE OF THE U.S. BICENTENNIAL PROVIDED OCCASION FOR ISRAELI LEADERSHIP AND AMB TOON TO REAFFIRM THE SIGNIFICANCE AND FOUNDATION OF U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONS. KNESSET AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS EXPRESSED DEEP APPRECIATION FOR MESSAGES FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP. OPPOSITION LEADER BEGIN INTRODUCED POLEMICAL NOTE INTO THE PROCEEDINGS BY CALLING FOR TRANSFER OF U.S. EMBASSY TO JERUSALEM. AMB TOON'S PARTICIPATION AND REMARKS RECEIVED EXTENSIVE MEDIA COVERAGE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ISRAELI KNESSET CONVENED IN SPECIAL SESSION ON JULY 12 TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE U.S. BICENTENNIAL. KNESSET SPEAKER YESHAYAHU, PRIME MINISTER RABIN AND LIKUD OPPOSITION LEADER BEGIN ADDRESSED THE KNESSET IN THE PRESENCE OF PRESIDENT KATZIR, AMB TOON AND THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. THE HOUR-LONG SESSION WAS FOLLOWED BY A RECEPTION AT WHICH AMB TOON REPLIED ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES.

2. THE STATMENTS OF YESHAYAHU, RABIN AND BEGIN HIGHLIGHTED ISRAEL'S APPRECIATION FOR U.S. POLITICAL, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT AND EMPHASIZED THE COMMON LEGACY, PARALLEL EXPERIENCES AND SHARED VALUES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES. FOLLOWING
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ARE SEVERAL EXCERPTS FROM PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S SPEECH.

3. BEGIN TEXT: IN OUR RELATIONS WITH AMERICA, THE HISTORIC AND EMOTIONAL DIMENSIONS ARE INTERTWINED, THE FABRIC OF RELATIONSHIPS THAT HAS BEEN WOVEN BETWEEN THE JEWISH PEOPLE OF AMERICA, BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES, CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD AS AN ORDINARY SYSTEM OF TIES BETWEEN STATES BASED ON A NARROW FOUNDATION OF COMMON INTERESTS ALONE. WE ARE PERFECTLY AWARE OF THE DIFFERENCES IN SIZE, RESOURCES AND INTERNATIONAL STANDING BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, NEVERTHELESS, I BELIEVE THAT THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES ARE BASED ON COMMON SOURCES AND A COMMON HERITAGE, PARALLEL HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES, VALUES AND IDEALS, WHICH UNITE OUR PEOPLES.

4. WE LIVE IN A TIME WHEN DEMOCRACY FACES CONSTANT DANGER FROM ANTI-DEMOCRATIC AND TOTALITARIAN FORCES. ALL THE DEMOCRACIES TURN TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES. PRESIDENT LINCOLN WAS RIGHT WHEN, SPEAKING OF THE AMERICAN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, HE SAID: "THERE IS SOMETHING IN THAT DECLARATION GIVING LIBERTY NOT ONLY TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY (AMERICA), BUT HOPE TO THE WORLD FOR ALL FUTURE TIME". INDEED, THE UNITED STATES HAS AN HISTORIC ROLE, AND EVERYTHING IT DOES, AT HOME OR BEYOND ITS BORDERS, NECESSARILY AFFECTS THE ENTIRE WORLD. SHOULD THE UNITED STATES, HEAVEN FORBID, DEVIATE FROM ITS ROLE, WOULD IT BECOME CLOSED IN AND ISOLATIONIST, AND TURN ITS BACK ON THE FREE WORLD--DEMOCRACY AND LIBERTY WILL BE IMPERILLED. THE NEEDS OF LIBERTY, DEMOCRACY AND PEACE NECESSITATE A STRONG AND SELF-CONFIDENT AMERICA, AN AMERICA AIDING THE DEVELOPMENT AND INDEPENDENCE OF FREEDOM AND PEACE LOVING NATIONS. WE ARE WELL AWARE THAT, AS A SMALL DEMOCRATIC NATION, IT IS AXIOMATIC THAT OUR STRENGTH LIES FIRST AND FOREMOST IN OUR DESIRE TO BE A FREE PEOPLE. WE LIVE IN THE FAITH THAT A FREE COUNTRY THAT IS NOT READY TO MOBILIZE ALL ITS HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES TO DEFEND ITSELF WILL NOT BE SAVED BY OTHERS. THIS AWARENESS, TRANSLATED INTO PRACTICE, ENTITLES US TO THE ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES.

5. THIS IS THE BASIS FOR THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OURSELVES AND THE UNITED STATES. THIS IS THE MORAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THE AID REFERRED TO BY THE UNITED STATES SINCE THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL. AND FOR THAT WE EXPRESS TO THE UNITED STATES OUR APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE ON ITS HOLIDAY.

6. WE DO NOT ALWAYS AGREE ABOUT POLITICAL MOVES AND MEASURES. IN THE COURSE OF THE YEARS, OUR FUNDAMENTAL FRIENDSHIP HAS FACED THE TEST EVEN IN TIMES OF POLITICAL DIFFERENCES OF OPINION. IT IS THE SPIRITUAL AND ETHICAL FOUNDATION COMMON TO THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL THAT LENDS A SOLID AND ENDURING BASIS TO THE

POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES. END TEXT.

7. BEGIN USED THE OCCASION TO URGE THE U.S. TO TRANSFER ITS EMBASSY TO JERUSALEM. HE CALLED ON AMB TOON TO BECOME A PERMANENT RESIDENT OF JERUSALEM, NOTING THAT THIS WAS THE OLDEST CAPITAL IN THE WORLD AND THE ONLY ONE WHERE THE U.S. AMBASSADOR DOES NOT RESIDE PERMANENTLY. (FULL TEXT OF YESHAYAHU AND RABIN STATEMENTS AND RELEVANT EXECERPTS FROM BEGIN SPEECH ARE BEING POUCHED TO NEA/IAI.)

8. IN COURSE OF KNESSET CEREMONY, MESSAGES FROM VICE-PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER, SENATE MAJORITY LEADER MANSFIELD AND HOUSE SPEAKER ALBERT WERE READ INTO THE RECORD. SPEAKER YESHAYAHU, MINISTERS AND MKS EXPRESSED THEIR DEEP APPRECIATION TO THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND THE SPEAKER AND THE MAJORITY LEADER FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE SPECIAL KNESSET SESSION.

9. KNESSET SPEAKER YESHAYAHU READ THE TEXT OF KNESSET PROCLAMATION IN HONOR OF THE BICENTENNIAL AND SUBSEQUENTLY PRESENTED THE PARCHMENT SCROLL IN ENGLISH AND HEBREW TO AMB TOON FOR TRANSMISSION TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND CONGRESS (TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION IS BEING TRANSMITTED BY SEPTEL).

10. AMB TOON THEN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION TO THE KNESSET, NOTING THAT HE AND HIS FELLOW AMERICANS FOUND THE NUMEROUS EVENTS OF RECENT DAYS COMMEMORATING THE BICENTENNIAL TO BE A HEART-WARMING EXPERIENCE WHICH HIGH LIGHTED THE KINSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES AS NEVER BEFORE. THE CEREMONIES WERE NOT PRO FORMA, BUT CAME FROM THE HEART, "THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND OUR TWO PEOPLES HAS REACHED NEW HEIGHTS. I AND MY FELLOW-AMERICANS ARE DEEPLY APPRECIATIVE TO THE KNESSET FOR HAVING ARRANGED THIS SPECIAL SESSION".

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11. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE ENTEBBE RESCUE OPERATION, NOTING THAT HISTORY WOULD RECORD IT AS ONE OF THE OUTSTANDING HUMANITARIAN MISSIONS OF THE MODERN ERA. HE COMMENTED ON THE POLITICAL WISDOM AND COURAGE OF THOSE WHO DECIDED ON THE OPERATION AND THE PHYSICAL COURAGE AND SKILL OF THOSE WHO CARRIED IT OUT. THE AMBASSADORS REMARKS WERE WIDELY REPORTED ON THE EVENING TELEVISION AND RADIO NEWS AND IN THIS MORNING'S PRESS.
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